A SEASONABLE

CHECK

TO THE

FURY

OF AN

Unfledg'd Miniſter of the GOSPEL.

In a LETTER to the

REVEREND Mr. *T*- - - - - -

A very young *Glôſterſhire* Clergyman.

Written by Mr. *J*- - - - - - - -

A very young *Wiltſhire* Layman.

Occaſion'd by the *Former*'s falſly charging the *Latter* with *Atheiſm*.

Judge not, that ye be not judged. Matth. vii. 1.
Let your Moderation be known unto all Men. Philip. iv. 5.
That ye might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleaſing, being fruitful in every good Work, and increaſing in the Knowledge of God. Coloſſ. i. 10.

In which are interſpers'd ſome Obſervations on *Atheiſm* and *Superſtition*, together with a Hint or two to the Profeſſors of *Chriſtianity* in general.

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THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

I Am well aware that it may be ſtil'd Impertinence and Preſumption in *Me* to trouble the Publick with an Affair of this Nature; but be it remember'd, that I have not the leaſt Fondneſs for the *Name of* AUTHOR. An honeſt Vindication of myſelf, in a Matter of the moſt important Concern, I was perſuaded was neither *trifling* nor *ridiculous*; and I knew no other Method of undeceiving ſome who had a perſonal Knowledge of me, and might probably have taken up an unjuſt Opinion of my Principles. Thoſe, however, who are not diſpoſed to give it a Reading, will have no Occaſion of Complaint. But ſhou'd it fall into the Hands of a *Stranger*, I ſcruple not to acquaint *Him* that I have partaken of the

Infirmities of Youth; yet I receive a Share of Comfort from reflecting that we are all weak, and expos'd to *Temptations*; that *Men of Senſe and Experience* are inclin'd to *forgive*; that *real Afflictions* are the genuine Parents of *Sobriety* and *Diſcretion*; and that *Characters* are form'd, not from ONE *Scene of Action*, but from the *Tenor of our Lives*. 'Tis worthy Obſervance, that I never abandon'd Virtue, tho' Paſſions of *another Caſt* have uſurp'd her Seat during my unhappy Intervals.

But *Theſe* perhaps may have already proclaim'd me the Scorn of the more rigidly *Wiſe* and *Virtuous*. If ſo hard a Sentence then ſhould be paſs'd, let thoſe *Rigid Ones* conſider that the *perfect Man* is not to be found, and that the Practice of Charity will be our ſureſt Title to the Promiſes of the Goſpel.

The popular Voice, kind or unkind, I uttery deſpiſe.------ Whoever derives his Quiet or Uneaſineſs from the Opinion the *Vulgar* entertains of him, has a conſtant Source of Afflictions to ſtruggle with. He cannot long enjoy Tranquillity of Mind, ſince it is in the Pow'r of every raſh, un-

thinking Head to diſturb his Repoſe: And tho' his good Qualities may much outweigh his Errors and Failings, yet the Force of the *former* will be always over-born, if we conſider the ſtrong Tendency of their Hearts to Scandal and Detraction, and their Slowneſs in paying the juſt Tribute of Praiſe, even to the *higheſt* and *moſt diſtinguiſh'd Merit*.

A

LETTER

TO THE

Rev. Mr. T---

Reverend Sir,

THIS Addreſs is not occaſion'd by my deſire to become the Subject of a *Ballad*, or the Topic at a *Sunday Afternoon*'s *Conference* in the Country.--- No: Nor has Want of Money, or Importunity of Friends drawn the few following Lines from a puerile, unpractis'd

tis'd Pen. A quick Senſe of that Injury which wou'd have awaken'd the moſt ſupine Mortal, and a juſt Notion of that Regard which every one owes to himſelf are the ſole Motives to this publick Appeal.

A Gentleman of your retentive Memory cannot have forgotten how lately you accus'd me of a *Disbelief* in the SUPREME BEING, nor can you be inſenſible of what Weight and Influence the *Sentence* of a *Divine* is in determining the Opinions of the People.---- 'Tis reaſonable now to conclude that this Notion is greedily embrac'd, and widely propagated, eſpecially after your Declaration that ſome of your *Brethren* thought as *favourably* of me as yourſelf.

Had this Allegation reſted on *probable* Circumſtances, a View to Intereſt wou'd have demanded my Silence; and had I been ſilent under a Charge of *Atheiſm*, I muſt have been held *ſelf-condemn'd by All.* But ſince this Charge is entirely falſe, rais'd on no other Foundation than *Fancy* or *Miſtake*, I am bound in Juſtice to Myſelf to arraign your Conduct, and to point out the *Arrogancy*, *Folly*, and *Wickedneſs* of your Proceedings.

I cannot promiſe you to be altogether *grave*. A Daſh of Mirth at Intervals may prove a ſeaſonable Relief to Reader as well as Writer, eſpecially after a *long-ſpun Period*. And what hinders a *jocoſe Fellow* from uttering the Truth?

Neither of us, I hope, has the Vanity to wiſh or expect that our Fame may be extended as far as *Tweed* by a Sheet or two of Paper. Let it not paſs the Circle of our Acquaintance. We are mere *Papilios* in *Senſe, Learning*, and *Condition*: diminutive Objects, far beneath the Notice of the *Great* and *Wiſe Ones* of the World.

This Conſideration has induc'd me to plant you in the Front with no other *Badge of Dignity* than the initial Letter of your Name. I am content to make my Appearance under the *ſame Colours*: ſufficient Tokens to the Gentlemen for whoſe Peruſal *This* is chiefly intended.

But the moſt cogent Reaſon for throwing a Veil over your Perſon ariſes from the Reverence I bear to that Precept of our bleſſed LORD and SAVIOUR, " *Love your Enemies*,

" *do*

" *do Good to them that hate you, and pray* " *for them that deſpitefully uſe you, and perſe-* " *cute you.*" ---- It may be ſaid that a due Attention to ſo divine a Leſſon wou'd have prevail'd on me to have forborn this Epiſtle too; it may be ſaid with equal Juſtneſs that the moſt notorious Offender againſt the Laws ſhould not ſuffer Puniſhment; and I doubt not but every Perſon of Candour will allow that in neglecting to do *myſelf* Right, I had dealt very *unequitably* with *You.*

But before we come to the Conſideration of *point-blank Atheiſm*, I cannot but obſerve how *like* a *Clergyman* and *Gentleman* you behaved in other Reſpects at our late Interview. And herein I ſhall keep cloſe to Facts, which 'tis not in your Power to diſprove.

You know that on a certain Afternoon we met at a certain Pariſh in *Glôſterſhire*, in Company with many others, to ſpend an Hour or two in an amicable Manner. What paſs'd between us there, I omit.-----In the Evening a Reverend and very worthy Gentleman living about two Miles diſtant, (with whom I was then a Sojourner) invited you to his Houſe, together with another Clergyman,

man, an entire Stranger to me. You both conſented, and we mounted our Horſes.

We had not rode far, before you came very *pertly* along-ſide, ſaluted me with *much* Familiarity, and added, in a Tone not expreſſing Concern, That *You pitied me greatly*. Dear Sir, why pity *Me?*---- Did ever I vent my Woes to *You*, or make any *Complainings in your Streets?*-----But you knew we were *All born to Trouble as the Sparks fly upwards*, and had moreover been a jolly *Partner* with me in ſome few youthful *Sallies*, ſo concluded from *woeful Experience* that I muſt be burthened with Afflictions; and as you had lately taken on you the Authority of the *Prieſthood*, cou'd not, out of the *Overflowings* of your Goodneſs, but lend me your friendly Aſſiſtance. Had *this* now been your real *Motive* (for Sufferings I confeſs I have felt) you had deſerv'd my ſincereſt Thanks. Had *this*, I ſay, been your *Motive*, 'twou'd have been viſible through a Mildneſs and Gentleneſs of Temper. You wou'd then have ſecretly drop'd a Tear, and in ſome Meaſure have ſhar'd my Diſtreſs. You wou'd then

have made a kind Repreſentation of thoſe *Depths* of Miſery, into which raſh Youth, unaided by *Experience*, had plung'd themſelves; and wou'd have prompted me to an *even*, *temperate* Courſe of Life, by ſhewing the Lovelineſs of VIRTUE, and the Deformity of *Vice*; by laying open to my View on the one Hand, the Train of ſolid Joys which accompany the *former*; and on the other Hand, the ſad Concomitants of the *latter*; *viz.* Want, Sickneſs, and Deſpair, in their ſevereſt Extremes.

But truly, *Sir*, I was ſorry to behold you under the *Impulſe* of a very different, nay *oppoſite* Spirit. I mourn'd a Heart *canker'd* with Pride and Spleen, and obſerv'd with real Pain, that a *falſe*, *diſtemper'd Zeal* had ſwallow'd up your *Charity*.

After many childiſh, airy *Boaſts*, concerning the Honour of your *Function*, you began to ſet forth the Heinouſneſs of the *Stage*; for you had heard it reported (to uſe your own Words) that I was about to turn *Actor*; and without giving me Time to inform you that I had *no*

ſuch

ſuch Deſign, you ſaid, *there was none good among them, no not one.* ----- THOU SUPERLATIVE COXCOMB !--- A Lady of the *French* Theatre, within theſe few Years, beſtow'd the Bulk of a handſome Fortune on *Indigents*, and retir'd *Youthful* and *Beautiful* to a Nunnery. You'll ſay, all are not chaſt, and righteous in Nunneries. They may not: But I am very much miſtaken in my Opinion of the *Dear Females*, if any but a Lady of the moſt *rigid Virtue*, wou'd leave gay Scenes, briſk Fellows, ſprightly Converſation, and ſoft Muſick for the gloomy Proſpect of the Walls of a *Cloiſter*; or in ſhort all the *Blandiſhments* of Senſe, for the *Severities* of RELIGION. Every one that has heard the Name of MILLS, has heard of his excellent *Chriſtian* Diſpoſition; and I cou'd point out Inſtances of ſingular Goodneſs amongſt the *Heroes*, and *Heroines* of the preſent Days. None, *Sir*, is oblig'd to bid adieu to VIRTUE, that is engag'd in ſuch a Way of Life; and though Maiden Aunts, and Country Curates may deſpiſe *Them*, *They* are not ſet at a Diſtance by the *Genii* and *Literati* of the Age. By the way too, there's many an honeſt Reverend ſtarving on a

Stipend much inferior to that of a *Scene-Shifter*, or a *Snuff-Candle*; and you'll find that the Generality of the World pay leſs Reſpect to a *poor Prieſt*, than a *wealthy Player*.

You muſt remember that my aſking you, why you pitied me, rais'd your Mirth: I might have aſk'd you, whence your Mirth too. Pity, *Sir*, and Mirth, are founded on a Conſciouſneſs of Superiority in the laughing and commiſerating Perſon. Now, pray *Sir*, in what Reſpects are you my Superior? ----- In *Years*? No ---- In *Judgment*? 'Tis diſputable--- In the *Gifts* of *Fortune* only then: And none but the Weakeſt make a Merit of *Thoſe*.

Thus far for our Converſe on the *Road*. We are now come to the *Habitation* of the *honeſt Gentleman*, who afforded us the Entertainment. Here one might imagine, that a Regard to Decency wou'd have taken Place. But the *Storm* was up, and cou'd not be ſoon allay'd. The *Heart*, that had long harbour'd the lurking *Dudgeon*, was now to be eas'd of its *Load*. I paſs over much rough,

rough, boiſterous Language on your Part, as well as your Deſire to diſturb the *Peace of the Houſe* by fighting, but beg you will call to Mind, that you ſaid I was an *impudent Fellow*, and an *Atheiſt*; and tho' you heard me ſolemnly declare I believ'd a GOD, and ador'd his NAME, you repeated the ſame Words *nine ſeveral Times* in the Space of *Half an Hour* before the two Gentlemen, our Companions.

Let thoſe ſpeak, who know us both, whether has the greater Share of *Impudence*. All muſt allow you have the beſt Title to it here by many Degrees. But let us ſee upon what Evidence this Charge of *Atheiſm* is grounded. Why truly on a *certain* Expreſſion of mine drop'd at a *certain* Place, on a *certain* Time, before *certain* People. What is it then? --- Diſcerning Gentleman, it is this, "GOD "perhaps laughs at human Actions." In which I ſee nothing that can offend the moſt ſanguine *Zealot*: For 'tis natural to ſuppoſe GOD may *laugh* as well as *repent*.*

* If the more ſcrupulous Obſerver ſhou'd be here offended at this *Antitheſis* of *Affections*, I have the expreſs Teſtimony of Scripture to recur to, "*The* MOST HIGH *ſhall laugh them to ſcorn.*"

Your

Your Subtility in giving it an *Atheiſtical* Turn is admirable, and with moderate Helps your Talents muſt ſoon carry you to a Perfection in *Jeſuitry*. But 'tis more charitable to ſuppoſe you made a moſt egregious *Blunder*.

'Tis poſſible you might *blunder* on, and imagine, that to a Mind well ſeaſon'd with Reflection, there was nothing ſhocking in the Charge of *Atheiſm*; that 'twas a *Profeſſion* very honourable, pleaſurable, and profitable; that it commended a Man often to the Favour of the *Ladies*, and ſometimes to that of a *Prince*; that it was a *Plant* which flouriſh'd exceedingly in theſe degenerate Times, (eſpecially in a *Climate* where is obſerv'd a juſt Contemperament of Heat and Cold;) and laſtly, that of all Men your *diſcretionary Atheiſt* ſtood the faireſt Chance for a *Mitre*, or a *Coronet*. In this Light the *Atheiſt* muſt be allow'd to be a very pleaſing Fellow; but I have unluckily heard, that this ſame *Atheiſt* is the *Scorn* of every ſober and wiſe Man; that he is too *dangerous* to be admitted to the Banquets of our BRITISH GENTRY; and that moreover he is the avow'd Ene-

my

my of every BRITISH PATRIOT.----- But to be ſerious.

The *Atheiſt* is one who diſbelieves the Exiſtence of a GOD; and who diſbelieves the Exiſtence of a GOD, diſbelieves a State of future Rewards and Puniſhments; and who diſbelieves a State of future Rewards and Puniſhments, will very probably not be conſtrain'd by any *Ties* but the Laws of that Conſtitution whereof he is Member. If theſe Laws now ſhou'd be in ſome Points *deficient*, or not *regularly exerted*; and if we ſhou'd ſuppoſe this *Atheiſt* too a Man of great Abilities of Mind, and endow'd with Authority and Power; what dreadful *Ravage* may ſuch a Monſter make in Society! Let us conſider *him* as not held down by any *Ties* of Duty or Affection, but graſping at every Object that may adminiſter to his Pleaſures without Regard to the Injuries he brings on his *Fellow Creatures*. Let us conſider *him* as a Rebel to his *Prince*, and a Scourge to his *Country*; oppreſſive to his *Dependants*, and ſavage to his *Offſpring*; void of *Conſcience*, *Truth*, and *Equity*; adopting every *helliſh* Scheme to accompliſh his Ends;

fraught with *Malice*, *Cruelty*, and *Revenge*; the ſworn Enemy of every *Species* of Being; waſting like a *Peſtilence* wherever he approaches; and ſpreading *univerſal* Confuſion throughout *univerſal* Nature.

This, *Sir*, ſeems to me the *Portraiture* of the *Atheiſt*. If any of this *Stamp* have appear'd, my narrow Reading does not inform me; but you muſt acknowledge that the *vicious Atheiſt*, whatever be his Circumſtances and Condition of Life, is capable of doing much Harm whilſt his *Principles* are conceal'd, and that a Diſcovery of *Them* puts Men ſufficiently on their Guard; ſo that he can neither challenge the Protection of his SOVEREIGN, nor the Friendſhip of any Member of the Community. --- How *deplorable* then muſt be his Situation! --- But what Sort of Deſtiny wou'd you allot *him*, who cou'd load his *Neighbour* with ſuch a falſe Imputation? Shou'd not *he* be diſtinguiſh'd by the moſt *infamous* Mark, be depriv'd of the *ſweeteſt* Privileges of Life, and be rank'd amongſt the *Abjects* and *Outcaſts* of the Creation?

I ſaid the *vicious Atheiſt*, becauſe 'tis poſſible a Man may think very little of *Heav'n*, and yet have every *heavenly Quality* inherent in his Compoſition; as on the other Hand, a Man may imagine himſelf under the full Favour of *Heav'n*, and at the ſame Time be the Image and Inſtrument of *Hell*: Nay, that this latter has been often the Caſe, if you will take a ſhort *Trip* with me I'll engage to convince you: But what if I proceed one Step farther, and convince you too, that this *Atheiſt* and *very religious* Perſon are allied, with this Difference in favour of the *former*, that he is the Semblance only of the *latter*, the faint *Copy* of the deviliſh *Original?*

Now then, *Sir*, for the Province of RELIGION, wherein I confeſs myſelf almoſt a Stranger, a Youngſter very ſlenderly vers'd in the Writings of the FATHERS. If I ſhou'd make any *Blunders* therefore, 'tis expected you will uſe your Authority and Learning in ſetting me right by Quotations from *them*: Tho' if you will give yourſelf the Trouble of reading Monſieur DAILLE's excellent Treatiſe of their right Uſe, you

will henceforth ſuffer moſt of the *decrepid** Gentlemen to lie undiſturb'd in the muſty Corners of a *College* Library.

RELIGION, *Sir*, is the chief Bond of human Society, and I venture to affirm that the RELIGION of CHRIST (independently conſidered of its great Aim, *viz.* the ſecuring the eternal Happineſs of each Individual) is moſt excellently calculated to render us, even in this Life, more eaſy to ourſelves, and uſeful to Community. It every where ſtrongly enforces Love and Union amongſt Men, and a Spirit of Charity, Meekneſs, and Benevolence breathes through the whole. The early Converts to CHRISTIANITY partook largely of *this Good*, which the Goſpel had intrroduc'd into the World. *This* ſhone forth in all their Actions, and had ſuch a kindly Influence over the *Heathen* People, that it ſoften'd the moſt *ſtubborn* Heart, and even forc'd their Compliance when *Miracles* themſelves had fail'd.

* That the FATHERS were *Men*, and *Men* too of exalted Piety none will deny; but if to confound, misconſtrue, miſapply, and miſguide, be Marks of *Lameneſs*, one might dare to ſay, that moſt of *Them halted* miſerably.

But

But when the Cauſe of CHRIST became link'd with the *ſecular Arm*, and *Tyrants* and *Monſters* had undertaken its Patronage, *It* prov'd the fruitful Source of innumerable Evils to Mankind. The *Scene* which here begins to unfold itſelf ſo ſtrikes our Attention, that we ſtand *fix'd* in Sorrow for a while, and behold it with a *tenfold* Aſtoniſhment. To paint *it* in its true Colours is a Taſk adapted to the *greateſt* Pen. 'Twill ſuffice for *me* to have lightly touch'd on a Part of the *Miſchiefs*, which the *Abuſe* of CHRIST's RELIGION has brought on Society.

I might here obſerve that *Atheiſm* tends not ſo much to the Diſhonour of GOD as *Superſtition*, ſince it were better to have no Opinion of GOD at all, than ſuch as is unworthy of HIM. That *Scarecrow* Deity which the Votaries of Superſtition have created, and rais'd to the Throne of Heav'n, is a *little, merry, crafty, ſubtle, furious, revengeful, partial, capricious, tricking, ſhifting, leaguing, intriguing, jugling, wonder-working God*; and the Qualities *They* aſcribe to *Him* are fitter for a *Sorcerer* or a *Jeſuit* than for the wiſe

AUTHOR of NATURE.---- But to my Purpoſe.

That *Men* of advanc'd Learning, and who muſt have had juſt Conceptions of human Nature; who were inveſted with abſolute *Sway*, and ſhou'd have plac'd their higheſt Ambition in diffuſing *Bleſſings* on their Fellow Creatures; that *theſe*, I ſay, cou'd doom the Virtuous and Innocent to Miſery in all its afflicting Shapes; that they cou'd behold Racks and Tortures with a calm, undaunted Eye, and remain *unſhaken* when the moral Frame of Things was thus *convuls'd*; nay farther, that they cou'd *triumph* at the Execution of theſe Terrors, ſeems to exceed the utter Bounds of Credibility; and one wou'd be inclin'd to think it an Act *Humanity* was not ſuſceptible of, even under its fouleſt Diſgrace. But that this has been practis'd thro' Pretence of *Zeal* for RELIGION the Annals of ſome Countries ſuffer us not to doubt.

Was there any *one*, whoſe Integrity knew not how to *bend*, who cou'd not offer Violence to that *diviner Part*, his Reaſon, nor impiouſly extinguiſh that *Light*,

Light, which his Maker had ordain'd in his Breaſt, to point out to him the ſmooth Path to Happineſs, and to direct his Goings; *he* was ſentenc'd to linger out the Remainder of his Days under Want and Confinement; depriv'd in ſome Sort of the common Benefits of *Nature*; cut off from every *ſocial* Enjoyment; and languiſhing under the heavieſt Preſſures that *Malice* cou'd ſuggeſt, or *Pow'r* inflict: Nor did his Sufferings terminate with the moſt painful Death, but his *Name* ſtood *branded* on Record, and a *Curſe* was *infix'd* on his lateſt Poſterity.

Nor were *theſe* Barbarities the Portion only of a *few*, who had the Wiſdom and Fortitude ſolemnly to diſavow the *Schemes* which theſe *Monſters of Humanity* had erected; but we find *Them* ſhow'ring down their Vengeance on *Multitudes*, who were nurtur'd under the ſacred Influence of Truth, and wantonly maſſacring *Thouſands* without Reſpect to Age, Sex, or Condition. And indeed we may in ſome Meaſure ceaſe to wonder, that neither *Female*, nor *Infant* Cries, nor the juſt *Expoſtulations* of a Sufferer were powerful enough to ſubdue their Fierce-

neſs

neſs of Diſpoſition, when every good and gentle *Affection* was vitiated, or eras'd; when a *Frenzy* had ſeiz'd the Head, and a *Fury* the Heart; when Ordinances, *divine* and *human*, were *boldly* trampled over, and *baſely* perverted; when Pow'r was wreſted to the Prejudice of *Thoſe* it was ordain'd to defend; when Tyranny and Perſecution prevail'd over Liberty and Peace; when the Religion they eſpous'd was proſtituted to the moſt *ſcandalous* Purpoſes, and made ſubſervient to the *Luſts* of its Profeſſors; when in ſhort there appear'd a total Diſſolution of *Law*, *Order*, *Harmony*, and a Corruption of all Things both *ſacred* and *civil*.

If we turn our Eyes to our own Country, it preſents us with a melancholy Proſpect of *Calamities* which Religious *Deluſions* of another Sort have occaſion'd; but ſince the Recital of them might poſſibly awaken that *tumultuous* Spirit which ſeems to have been ſomewhat mitigated and compos'd, it becomes us rather to drop a Tear, and paſs them over in Silence. We ſhou'd lift up Hearts full of Gratitude to that PROVIDENCE, which has placed us under the Guidance of a

SOVEREIGN,

SOVEREIGN, who ſtands firmly attach'd to the Cauſe of TRUTH; whoſe *fatherly* Care for Mankind is confeſs'd in the Exertion of every *lenient* Art of Government; whoſe Wiſdom and Piety have ſettled our *civil* Liberties on the ſecureſt Baſis, and ſo fortified our pure and holy Religion, that the Waves of *Superſtition* and *Enthuſiaſm* ſhall beat againſt it in vain.

One might hope to ſee in theſe *enlightned* Times an utter Extirpation of Religious Rage; to ſee *Chriſtianity* reſume her native Form, and her Advocates poſſeſs'd of thoſe Qualities which ſhould diſtinguiſh the Servants of the LORD. And indeed true Patterns of *Excellency* are to be found amongſt the Paſtors of our Church; ſuch as are worthy the Praiſe, the Eſteem, the Adoration of Men. --- But 'tis to be mourn'd that there yet remains Cauſe of Complaint againſt *ſome*, whoſe Hearts ſeem quite eſtrang'd from the Tenor of the *Goſpel*, not animated by its Spirit, nor directed by its Precepts.

'Tis

'Tis a true, but melancholy Circumſtance, that an Attempt to promote the Intereſts of true RELIGION and VIRTUE is cenſur'd by many of the holy Order as an *Invaſion* on CHRISTIANITY. A Leſſon of Morality, which teaches, that the Rules of VIRTUE is fix'd and unalterable, alarms a whole *Swarm*; and Obſervations offer'd, which are drawn from a Writer not of their own *Clan*, (tho' in thoſe Obſervations are contain'd the very Eſſentials of thoſe few Truths in which all thinking Men agree,) are held with *Them* ſufficient Reaſons to explode and condemn whole Treaſures of Wiſdom. ---- Name but SHAFTSBURY at a *Threepenny Club* of Country Curates, and you'll be immediately ſaluted with a Volley of hard Names, ſuch as *Dog*, *Infidel*, *Atheiſt*, (perhaps intermix'd with *Oaths* too,) and 'tis well if their *Fury* end there; for I have known a Perſon wear very convincing Marks of *it* on his Head, only for ſaying with all decent Submiſſion, that *Infatuation* might poſſibly be miſtaken for *Inſpiration*. Nay 'tis evident by your *making ready to Battle*, that you intended to give demonſtrative Proofs of your *Zeal* againſt

againſt one you held an *Atheiſt* for uttering a Line of Mr. POPE's ſomewhat diverſified

... *Heav'n with Laughter the vain Toil ſurveys.*

I cannot but fancy myſelf condoling with your Pariſhioners, had you enter'd the *Church* the *Sunday* following with a *black Eye* or a *blunted Noſe*, which certainly muſt have been your Fate, had I in Contraſt with you been poſſeſt of an *Heterodox Delirium.*

It is frequently, and juſtly lamented, that *Thoſe*, who are *commiſſion'd* to admoniſh us of our Faults, are apt to ſtretch their Pow'r too far in treating *Characters* without Mercy, and determining at Random the Fates and Fortunes of their *Fellow Creatures.* Now were I diſpos'd to deal Invectives as liberally as ſome *Doctors* of the *Church* do Damnation, I have as many Marks as the moſt envenom'd Heart wou'd wiſh for; KINGS, PRIESTS, PHILOSOPHERS, STATESMEN, WHIGS, and TORIES. KINGS indeed I forbear, becauſe their Perſons are *ſacred*; and PRIESTS are dedicated to the immediate Service of the LORD. But

what if I were to call PLATO and SOCRATES *d—mn'd* Lyars? CICERO a *d—mn'd vain, prating, oſtentaticus* Fellow? CATO a *d---mn'd* Coward? and if I ſhou'd not rouſe the *Manes* of the GREAT CÆSAR, I cou'd make it appear that He had a *d--mn'd mean* Spirit, becauſe He cou'd not bear being rallied on the Account of his Baldneſs. Moreover, we are told He was *pathic* for Hire to NICOMEDE *King* of *Bithynia*. The Worthies of the preſent Age are not unlike their Brethren of Antiquity; nor need we croſs the *Streights* for *Knaves*, *Fools*, and *Madmen*. There are plenteous Crops of our own *Growth*; but I am ſo complaiſant as to leave them to be *characteris'd* by ſucceeding Generations. The Truth is, there are Flaws in the greateſt *Characters*; and ſince Perfection is a Point we cannot hope to arrive at *here*, the Perſon, whoſe good Qualities bear an over-Proportion to his Failings, is certainly to be deem'd a very reſpectable Member of Community. Let us conſider that we are but *Men*, and that theſe (perhaps neceſſary) Evils muſt be overcome *when Death is ſwallowed up in Victory*: And let us be aſſur'd that the true Uſe and

End

End of CHRISTIANITY is to heal our Infirmities, to render this our State of *Apoſtacy* tolerable, and in fine to make us *perfect even as our* FATHER *in Heaven is perfect.*

I ſhou'd not have taken Leave of you ſo ſoon, was not my Paper almoſt full. I can only add my hearty Requeſt, that you will be henceforth more *diligent* in your Enquiries, more *modeſt* in your Judgment, and more *ſlow* to give Offence even to the Weakeſt. The *holy Veil*, and *pompous Title* will not prove a Sanctuary for Ignorance and Vice; nor will TRUTH fail of carrying with it its genuine Force from whatever Quarter it comes.

I am Yours, &c.

(11)

I am Sirs, &c.